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ON THE MALABAR COAST

I remember a great sea breaking on grey sands,
And cocoanut palms that came down nearly to the water,
And children walking with flowers in their hands
Silently, and without laughter.
Through a hot day I watched that shore, and after,
When night walked on the sea and picked her way
From wave to wave, I waited for the moon
As a man for his friend at the end of day. . . .
Distantly through the palms a drum was beating,
And somewhere, far-off voices sang together
A wild, monotonous tune that kept repeating
While I waited for the moon that rose up never.
Then a wind came talking to the palms,
And no voice was there for friendly word with me,
So I lay on the beach with my head on my arms,
Waiting for the moon to rise from the sea.

But she, that is a friend to strangers in far lands
And hospitably welcomes with the same kind face
That once they reached to touch with baby hands
From little white cots in the old home place,
Came not all that night, though I lay on the sands
Longing for a friend, with my face in my hands.

WILLIAM G. SHAKESPEARE.

Bombay, India.